



PROPOSAL:

KING'S CROSS VISITOR MOORING TRIAL

July 2015

1. Introduction

This document sets out proposals for a 12 month trial of a Visitor Mooring at King's Cross on the Regent's Canal, **between York Way (Maiden Lane Bridge) in the west, and Caledonian Road (Thornhill Bridge) in the east.**

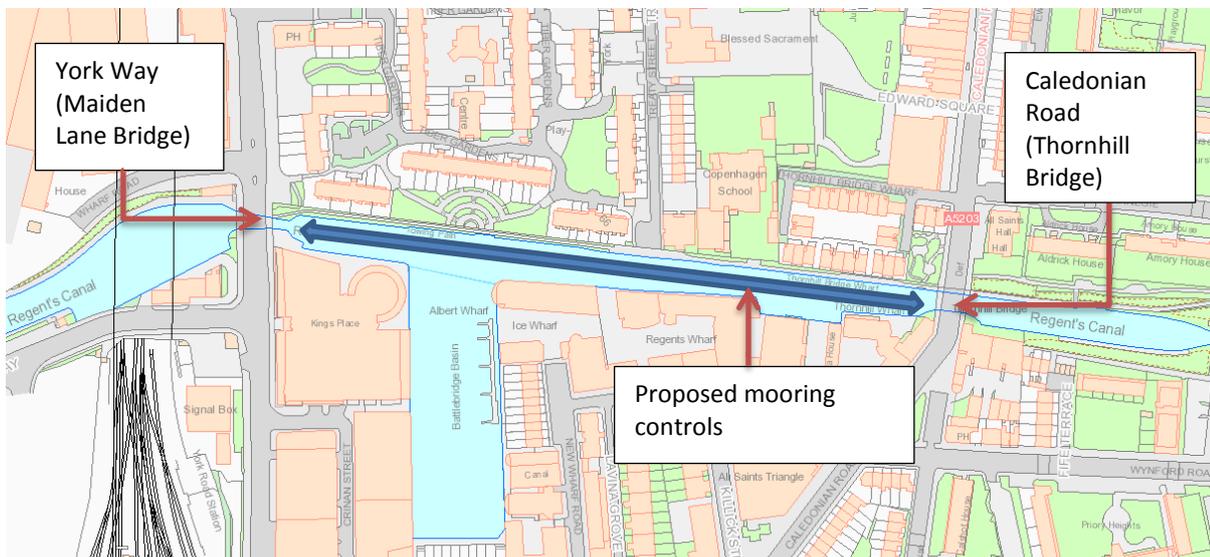
The proposals aim to improve the management of moorings in this increasingly popular location, so that they can be used fairly by a wide range of boaters and the canal environment can be enjoyed by all towpath users and local communities.

The trial is intended to manage access to moorings while a large section of towpath mooring is suspended between Maiden Lane and St.Pancras Lock due to major development work on the Argent site. The moorings alongside the Argent site will be reviewed later this year in advance of the towpath being returned to use. The review will be shared for comment and the feedback used to inform this trial and develop more a comprehensive mooring plan for the King's Cross area.

For this reason, at this stage the proposals do not cover the moorings between St.Pancras Lock and Maiden Lane Bridge (around Granary Square); the moorings between Thornhill Bridge and the Islington Tunnel; or any moorings east of the Tunnel.

This proposed trial will be reviewed over the summer of 2016, including gathering feedback from users and local communities, using the learning to establish a long-term plan.

Fig.1 Location Map



2. Background

The Regent's Canal has become increasingly popular over the last few years, both for boating and as a resource for walking, cycling and other leisure pursuits. The numbers of boats using the Regent's Canal has grown significantly, with certain stretches becoming very congested. In the central Regent's Canal area, there are two designated Visitor Moorings at Camden and at Noel Road, Islington. There are also a number of other stretches within this central area where boats may moor on the towpath casually.

The stretch between Camden and the Islington Tunnel has no designated Visitor Moorings, and the section between Maiden Lane Bridge and Thornhill Bridge and has become particularly popular and congested. Boats often moor in excess of two deep and the area has experienced regular over-staying.

This has led to increasing competition for mooring space and reduced access to the towpath for boaters disembarking young people or people with disabilities, and for authorised boats wishing to trade temporarily along the towpath. Boats breasting up can be a navigation hazard, especially opposite the entrance to Battlebridge Basin and in the Islington Tunnel approach, as well as reducing the navigable channel. It can also lead to a concentration of smoke from boats' heating stoves, and engine noise and fumes leading to nuisance for towpath users and local residents.

Following two meetings with local stakeholders (including residents, the Angel Association, local boating organisations, Islington Council, Hackney Council, local boat residents and volunteer 'Caretaker Boaters'), the Trust has developed a draft Action Plan to help improve the way the central Regent's Canal is managed. This brings together a range of actions, and includes a proposal for a Visitor Mooring.

3. Visitor Mooring proposals

These proposals build on the support expressed in the Central London Visitor Mooring Plan consultation (spring 2014) for more visitor moorings across London, including at King's Cross. They also build on two stakeholder workshops held in Dec. 2014 and Feb.2015 at the London Canal Museum, which explored ways of improving the overall management of the Canal across a range of issues such as moorings, waste, management and crime.

The proposals take account of submissions made by Islington Council, the Angel Association and the volunteer Caretaker Boaters regarding mooring and management arrangements. There were a number of common areas of agreement in these submissions, as well as some differences of opinion in how certain issues should be addressed. The proposals aim to achieve a balance between these submissions.

Due to the high level of mooring demand in this area and the growing number of boats using the canals in London, these proposals aim to preserve the existing length of moorable towpath, while introducing more effective measures to manage the moorings.

3.1 Key proposals:

- i) To introduce a designated Visitor Mooring with a mix of **2-day and 7-day stay times** in designated sections, while retaining some 14-day casual mooring – justification: to provide a range of stay times to meet the needs of short term visitors and those requiring longer stays, manage stay times and limit the potential for excessive environmental impacts

- ii) Mooring to be restricted to **maximum of double-line** (defined as two narrowboats or one wide-beam), with some sections retaining a 'no mooring' designation or being restricted to single-line only – justification: to ensure the navigation is kept clear for safe passage of all types of craft, permit safe and convenient mooring, limit the potential for excessive environmental impacts, and for consistency with other visitor moorings
- iii) Application of **£25 daily extended stay charge** as part of Visitor Mooring site rules – justification: to encourage boats to move onto other moorings when the free-of-charge period expires, and to be consistent with other Visitor Moorings in London
- iv) Reservation of one **mooring for a Volunteer Caretaker Boater** at the Thornhill Bridge end to welcome boaters, make them aware of the Visitor Mooring arrangements, collect data on smoke and noise and report back, manage issues on site and inform the Trust where this can't be resolved – justification: to build positive relationships with moorers, raise awareness of new rules and behaviour expectations, and address any poor mooring and inconsiderate behaviour early; and to collect monitoring information on the extent of engine use, generators and chimney smoke
- v) **Clear signage** to reinforce Visitor Mooring rules (to include: consideration of neighbours, considerate use of engines/generators and only between 8am and 8pm) supported by welcome letters and ranger patrols – justification: to raise awareness of good neighbourliness, manage visitor behaviour and build good neighbour relations
- vi) **Focussed monitoring and enforcement** involving Trust staff (enforcement team, mooring rangers, and Operations staff) as well as volunteer rangers gathering regular data and making early interventions – justification: to ensure that the mooring is well-managed and issues are dealt with promptly

3.2 Proposed mooring plan

The section of towpath covered by these proposals (between Maiden Lane Bridge and Thornhill Bridge) currently comprises a mix of paved surface and grass verge. Boats are able to moor by using mooring pins in the grass verge, or by tying onto the mooring rings that are already in place. The mooring currently provides short term 'casual mooring', where boats may moor for up to 14 days in accordance with their licence terms and conditions. There are no other specific restrictions on stay times or behaviour at these moorings.

Recent towpath improvement work, undertaken through the King's Cross Canal Fund, has widened the paved surface of the towpath and reduced the grass verge in this section, as well as installing additional mooring rings in between existing rings to reduce the gaps between them. The rings currently extend from Maiden Lane Bridge to the raised section of towpath at the Treaty St. access point.

With growing demand for mooring in London, the Trust aims to maintain the ability to moor on the towpath wherever possible. It is therefore proposed to install new rings to replace the grass verge where it has been removed through the King's Cross Canal Fund works (between the Treaty St. access and Thornhill Bridge Wharf), and to introduce a designated Visitor Mooring with site specific

mooring rules. This will be supported by reduced stay times, enhanced monitoring and enforcement, and customer support from a Volunteer Caretaker Boater.

Overview of mooring plan:

The stretch is divided into sections:

Section 1 - Maiden Lane to Tiber Gardens (14-day casual mooring – single line mooring only)

Section 2 - Tiber Gardens to Treaty Street (7-day visitor mooring)

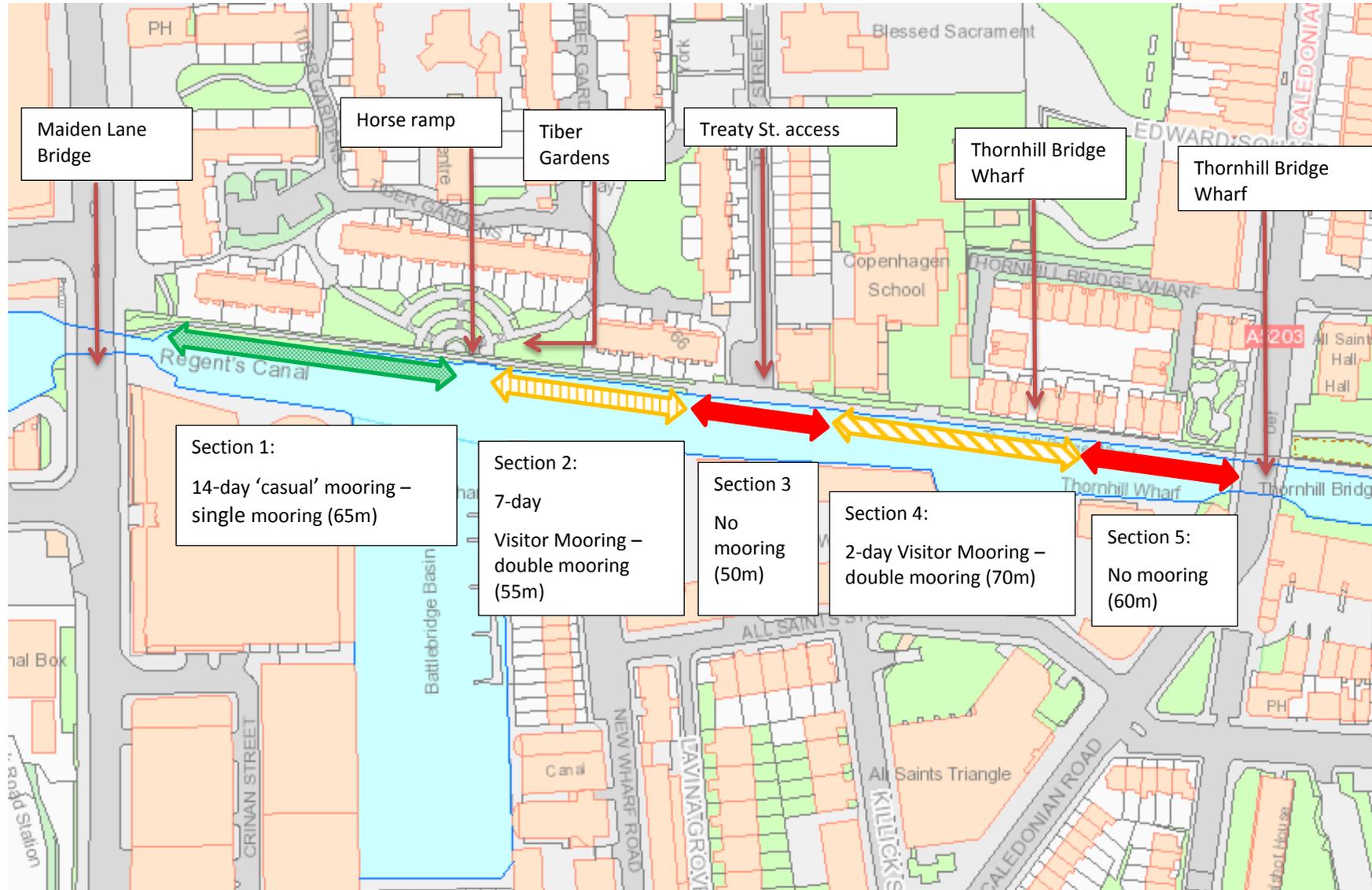
Section 3 - Treaty St. (no mooring)

Section 4 - Treaty Street to Thornhill Bridge Wharf (2-day visitor mooring)

Section 5 - Thornhill Bridge Wharf to Thornhill Bridge (no mooring)



Fig.2: Overview map of proposals





i) Section 1 - Maiden Lane to Tiber Gardens (14-day casual mooring)

This section has a mix of grass verge and hard surface, with existing mooring rings. There is also a horse ramp opposite the gates to the Tiber Gardens open space.

It is proposed to retain 14-day casual mooring in this section up to the horse ramp. Mooring at the horse ramp can damage this historic feature, so it is proposed that no mooring should be permitted at the horse ramp.

Double mooring in this section can also be hazard to navigation as the channel narrows approaching the bridge, where commercial barges require greater width to steer through the bridge hole safely. Furthermore, windy conditions can also affect boats entering or leaving Battlebridge Basin. For these reasons, it is proposed to limit this section to single line mooring only.

Total length: c.65m

Proposed stay time: 14 days (as existing)

Mooring rules: single line of boats only (one narrowboat or wide-beam); no mooring at horse ramp

ii) Section 2 - Tiber Gardens to Treaty Street (7-day visitor mooring)

This section is made up of a hard surface with existing mooring rings.

It is proposed to introduce a 7 day visitor mooring here. The existing mooring rings (spaced 10m apart) have already been supplemented by additional rings to reduce the gaps to 5m (through the King's Cross Canal Fund). This is more convenient for smaller boats and should avoid the need for mooring pins to be hammered into the towpath, especially as the grass verge has been significantly reduced or removed through the Canal Fund works.

Total length: c.55m

Proposed stay time: 7 days

Mooring rules: maximum two boats abreast (two narrowboats or one wide wide-beam)

iii) Section 3 - Treaty Street (no mooring)

The towpath opposite the Treaty St. access gate comprises a raised concrete ramp (which covers a water cooling discharge point). This section is currently designated as 'no mooring' to protect the concrete ramp and prevent damage to the towpath. There is no grass verge here, nor any mooring rings. This helps to reduce potential conflict between moored boats, pedestrians accessing the towpath through the Treaty St. gates and towpath users. It also provides access to the water for people to fish, observe and feed wildlife, or enjoy views of the water. It is therefore proposed to keep the Treaty St. ramp section as a 'no mooring' section.

Total length: c.50m

Mooring rules: no mooring

iv) Section 4 - Treaty St. to Thornhill Bridge Wharf

Until April 2015 the towpath from Treaty St. to Thornhill Bridge Wharf was a mix of grass verge and hard surface. The King's Cross Canal Fund has improved the towpath throughout this section, with the grass verge being replaced by a wider paved surface. This has reduced the ability to moor here since the works were completed.

During the Olympics, mooring rings had been installed in the whole length between Treaty St. and Thornhill Bridge. These were subsequently removed due to a lack of consultation, and there are now no rings in this section. However, boats continued to use the section of grass verge to moor as they are permitted to do under boating regulations. This mooring capacity has been lost temporarily as a result of the removal of the verge and its replacement with paving through the Canal Fund works.

As we wish to maintain moorings in the King's Cross area, while safeguarding the amenity of neighbouring residents, we propose to re-install mooring rings in the approximately 70m stretch where the verge was recently removed. This area is proposed as a Visitor Mooring with a 2-day stay limit, to encourage short stays. It is proposed to install mooring rings at 5m intervals.

This shorter stay Visitor Mooring would supplement the Islington Visitor Mooring (to the east of the Islington Tunnel) in providing access to the facilities in Angel town centre as well as access to King's Cross. The shorter stay time is also intended to provide provision for boats cruising through London and needing a very short stop-over in this popular location.

Total length: c.70m

Stay time: 2 days

Mooring rules: maximum two boats abreast (two narrowboats or one wide-beam)

v) Section 5 - Thornhill Bridge Wharf to Thornhill Bridge

From Thornhill Bridge Wharf to Thornhill Bridge, where the towpath was already fully hard surfaced with no facilities for mooring, we will keep this section as no mooring.

Total length: c.60m

Stay time: not applicable

Mooring rules: No mooring

3.3 Management

The Trust has well-established mooring management systems to communicate mooring rules, monitor mooring usage, and enforce against mooring infringements. This involves collection of regular boat sightings, followed up by automated text message reminders for over-staying, patrol notices posted on non-compliant boats, and warning letters. Those not complying are placed into our enforcement process, which may result in boats ultimately having their licences revoked or not renewed and then being removed from the Trust's waters.

The introduction of a Visitor Mooring in this location will enable more effective action to be taken against over-stayers, including the levying of an extended stay charge for anyone over-staying on the Visitor Mooring.

New Visitor Mooring signage will be installed to designate the lengths with different stay times and to reflect the new mooring rules, taking care to avoid over-proliferation of signage and towpath markings. The signage will include the standard £25 per day extended stay charge that applies on other Visitor Moorings in London, and guidance about keeping engine and generator use to the hours of 8am-8pm (as specified in our established licence terms and conditions).

Mooring rangers will continue to patrol the moorings regularly, communicating mooring rules and raising awareness about considerate behaviour. They will also deal with mooring rule infringements, and will refer persistent or serious infringements to the Enforcement team for action.

The Trust aims to extend its Volunteer Caretaker Boater scheme to include this proposed new Visitor Mooring. A Caretaker Boater mooring will be reserved at the Thornhill Bridge Wharf section. The Caretaker Boaters' role will continue to be welcoming and supporting boaters, making sure they are aware of the mooring arrangements, monitoring and logging of engine use and chimney smoke, and being a ready presence on site to manage issues as they arise, wherever possible.

4 Next steps

The Trust aims to implement these changes in the summer of 2015, to enable greater access to this popular mooring location and greater control over navigation hazards.

We are inviting comments and feedback on the proposals. The feedback will be reviewed and a final decision made by the Trust after comments have been received, for implementation in the summer.

The use of the moorings, and the impact of these changes, will be reviewed as part of the London Mooring Strategy being developed by the Trust during 2015 and 2016.

Please submit any views or comments on these proposals to Sorwar Ahmed, Boater Liaison Manager by **Monday 7 September 2015**:

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or write to:

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